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New offensives in West Papua and East Timor and western arms deliveries to Indonesia

Reports have been received quite independently from resistance forces in West Papua and East Timor that in August this year, the Indonesian Armed Forces launched new offensives in both territories. The reports reveal that aerial bombardments have occurred, causing many casualties. Troops have carried out raids and house-to-house searches in many villages, causing hardship and distress. There have been arrests, disappearances and acts of brutality against defenceless civilians. According to one source, the population of an entire village in East Timor was massacred in reprisal for an ambush by armed guerrillas of an Indonesian military convoy, in which a number of soldiers were killed. In East Timor, men have been obliged to take part in 'fence-of-leg' operations to round up guerrillas.

The Indonesian authorities do not officially acknowledge that these military operations are under way. In keeping with normal practice, they exercise strict secrecy on the military situation in both territories. However, information about the offensives, coming from quite separate sources for each of the territories, shows a remarkable similarity between the two operations. The offensives suggest that the authorities are worried about the level of opposition to Indonesian rule among both West Papuans and East Timorese and about the tenacity of armed resistance in both territories.

The primary purpose of the offensives would appear to be to forestall unrest before and during the general elections in April 1987, to end armed resistance and to intimidate people against supporting or showing sympathy for the resistance. The pacification of East Timor by April 1987 is particularly important to Jakarta in view of its plans to invite foreign representatives to observe the elections, hoping to prove that the East Timorese accept integration.

In West Papua, the offensive is also aimed at restoring foreign investors' confidence, following guerrilla operations in the Sarmi region west of Jayapura earlier this year. This is a region where Shell has extensive concessions and is engaged in petroleum drilling and exploration. During one OPM raid, two Shell employers were killed, causing the company to halt or curtail operations. According to one source [**The Economist**, 15 November 1986], Shell has decided to give up its drilling concession in the area, highlighting the company's concern about the security situation.

The two offensives involve the deployment of a large number of extra troops using a variety of equipment: fighter-bomber jets and transport aircraft, helicopters, probably including gunships, naval vessels both for amphibious landings and naval bombardment, troop-transport vehicles, parachutes and firearms. This is the very type of equipment that has been delivered to Indonesia over the past few years by western arms manufacturers. It brings into question the policy of western governments to grant licences for arms exports to Indonesia.

Western governments justify these exports on the grounds of helping Indonesia strengthen its defence capability. British Government ministers give repeated assurances that "human rights issues are taken into account" and the Government "would not supply items which, in our judgement, are likely to be used for internal repression". Some western governments are actually supplying weapons in contravention of national laws prohibiting the supply of weapons to countries in a state of conflict.

Governments should recognise that arms supplied by the West have strengthened Indonesia'a capacity for acts of aggression and pacification

against unarmed civilians. In addition, every military offensive inevitably results in a serious escalation in the level of human rights violations. Such military operations exacerbate the basic problem at the root of all the unrest in both West Papua and East Timor, namely, the denial of the right to self-determination.

Western governments should dissociate themselves from such operations by imposing an immediate embargo on all arms exports to Indonesia. Supplying arms to Indonesia means condoning and encouraging aggression and repression against the peoples of West Papua and East Timor.

The offensive in West Papua

The offensive in West Papua, code-named **Operasi Sate** (Operation 'Skewered Meat') followed an escalation of OPM operations in late 1985. During 1984 and most of 1985, guerrilla attacks were mainly confined to the border area, but more recently, they have extended across a wide area west of Jayapura, threatening Indonesian army and police positions. Since early 1984, the entire border area has seen the exodus of village people across the border into Papua New Guinea, itself a sign of dissatisfaction with Indonesian rule.

The following operations by Indonesian forces have been reported:

* Bombing sorties by four F-5 Tiger jets in August to destroy guerrilla headquarters, known as Markas Victoria. The target was not hit, but much damage was inflicted in the surrounding countryside.
* Aerial bombardment in East and West Sarmi districts on 14 and 15 August, killing a number of people, and making many homeless. Some villages were attacked by gunfire from naval vessels. During these attacks, an OPM leader, Hermanus Bonay was killed.
* Aerial bombardment along the river Mamberamo, farther west in Sarmi district, on 16 and 17 August, killing many villagers.
* Heavy penetration of troops in villages and kampungs along the northern coastal strip, from Ormu through Sarmi to the Mamberamo River. Raids and house-to-house searches have been accompanied by arrests and interrogation, disappearances, beatings, rape and the confiscation of implements like axes and knives. This saturation tactic began in March this year and was still in force in August.
* For strategic reasons, villagers have been denied the right to leave their villages to gather food, or to visit relatives, except under armed escort.
* A village churchman [penginjil] was shot and severely wounded by troops involved in such operations in Demta on 14 August. The churchman was crossing a river in a canoe, returning home from church-related duties, when he was accosted and shot by soldiers. Details of this incident have come to light because a formal complaint was made to the military authorities on the injured man's behalf. [The enclosed clipping reports that he later died of his injuries. Other sources do not confirm his death, but they confirm all the other details of this serious shooting incident.]
* 65 houses and a church in the village of Olmape (precise location not known) were burnt down. Villagers fled, chased by troops. Some were shot dead while others took refuge in the bush.
* Aerial bombardment around the Wissel Lakes, in the well-populated central highlands, in Wagete and Enarotali districts, destroying many homes, churches and schools. Many people died as a result, while survivors fled into the bush.
* A build-up of Indonesian military forces in the Muyu area, near the border in Merauke district. [This area is the source of about a quarter of the refugees now in Papua New Guinea. It was in Kiriwok that a Catholic catechist, Tuberius Uropdana, was beheaded and five men were shot dead, following which hundreds of villagers fled, crossing the border to PNG earlier this year.] At each of 14 locations in the Muyu area, there are

reported to be from 30 to 60 troops with modern equipment.
* These military operations were accompanied by summonses for interrogation and arrests of Papuans in Jayapura, working in the bureaucracy, to hunt down OPM sympathisers. This operation commenced on 28 April 1986.
* There are also reports that political prisoners held in Jayapura were transferred to prisons in Digul in Merauke and to Kalisosok Prison in Surabaya, East Java.

The offensive in East Timor

In August 1983, Armed Forces commander-in-chief, General Benny Murdani, announced that he would use "all the weapons at our disposal to crush the resistance". But the 1983 offensive failed to achieve its aim, apart from the surrender of a single Fretilin commander. Since 1984, Fretilin's armed wing, Falintil, has continued to consolidate its control over considerable areas of land in the eastern sector of the country, while spreading its operations to the central sector. In the east, it has waged attacks on military posts guarding strategic villages and carried out ambushes of army convoys. In this sector, Indonesian control does not extend much beyond the roads and the strategic villages located along these roads.

Following the unsuccessful 1983 offensive, the Indonesian army switched to a new strategy of strengthening its positions from north to south along a line from Baucau to Viqueque, pushing eastward, to contain and isolate Fretilin-controlled areas. But guerrilla units succeded in slipping through the encirclement to the central sector, thus enlarging the area of combat.

The Indonesian offensive launched in August this year appears to be aimed at reversing this situation. The details so far received are as follows:
* On 3 August, the village of Fo-Mano, Uatolari district was massacred by Indonesian troops, in reprisal for the ambush of an Indonesian convoy in which a number of men, including the commanding officer, were killed. This massacre appears to represent the first strike of the new offensive.
* Twelve divisions were dispatched to the eastern sector in August to push back guerrilla strongholds and capture the Fretilin leader, Gusmao Xanana.
* Timorese villagers from strategic villages in and around Baucau, Baguia, Quelique and Venilale have been dragooned into fence-of-leg operations against the guerrillas. The main objective appears to be to encircle the Mount Matebian region, where the Indonesians believe Xanana is now operating.
* As is usual during such operations, people in the strategic villages face heightened repression and even greater restriction on movements and food gathering, causing further deterioration in conditions inside the camps. Many more arrests and disappearances have been reported.
* A number of battalions have been thrown in to the central sector: six battalions around Soibada, Barique, Bubur Laron and Weberec, one in Maubisse, four in the bay of Tibar, west of Dili, four in Aipelo, four in Bemos, two in Areia Branca, two in Hera, two in Metinaro and two in Beban. A battalion is also operating around Bobonaro, in the western sector.
* On 15 September, three more battalions landed in Dili and held a show of force in the capital to intimidate the population, before heading south for operations against the guerrillas.
* There were many arrests in Ainaro and Aileu in August, apparently in preparation for the offensive. Among them were people who had recently been released from the prison island of Atauro.
* Six young men were arrested in Atsabe, in the west, when troops entered a church. These arrests are linked to the arrest of three East Timorese students in Jakarta in September. Two of these students are among the four East Timorese who asked the Dutch Embassy for help to go to Portugal.

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Parliamentary Human Rights Group

From Lord Avebury
Chairman

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I am writing as Chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group to express deep concern at reports of renewed military operations undertaken in West Papua and East Timor by the Indonesian Armed Forces since August this year. These operations inevitably bring with them an escalation in the sufferings and human rights violations inflicted on the populations of these two territories.

I am therefore sending the enclosed Memorandum to all European Community governments, on the occasion of the eleventh anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. I take this opportunity of urging your Government to consider placing an embargo on all exports of arms to Indonesia, in view of its acts of aggression against both East Timor and West Papua. It is surely indefensible for the governments of West Europe to be arming a state that is engaged in such offensive military operations.

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